



718.286.6000
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568



MELINDA KATZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315
QDACommunications@queensda.org

TWO MEN CHARGED WITH STABBING DEATH IN QUEENS;
ONE OF THE DEFENDANTS ALSO CHARGED WITH SECOND MURDER TWO DAYS LATER

*Both Victims Knifed to Death on City Streets;
Defendants Face Up to 25 Years-to-Life in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Raymond Kenner, 22, and Alexander Stephens, 31, have been charged with murder in the stabbing death of a man killed in Hollis, Queens, on December 21, 2021. Defendant Kenner is additionally charged with killing another man with a knife in Jamaica, Queens on December 23rd.

District Attorney Katz said, "As we close out 2021, sadly we have another two killings in our neighborhoods and one man is charged in both slayings just two days apart. A second co-defendant allegedly took part in one of the stabbings. This kind of violence and lawlessness is creating havoc and heartache in our communities, and it must end. The two defendants are now in custody and charged with very serious crimes."

Kenner, of West 31st Street in Manhattan, and Stephens, of 109th Road in St. Albans, Queens, were arraigned last night before Queens Criminal Court Judge David Kirschner on a complaint charging them with two counts of murder in the second degree, robbery in the first and second degree, tampering with physical evidence, criminal possession of stolen property the fifth degree and criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree. Defendant Kenner is also charged in a second complaint with murder in the second degree and criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree. Judge Kirschner ordered the defendants to return to Court on January 4, 2022. If convicted Kenner and Stephens face up to 25 years-to-life in prison. Kenner faces another 25 years-to-life on the second complaint.

According to the first complaint, just after 8:50 p.m. on Tuesday, December 21, 2021, the defendants were allegedly observed on video surveillance following Andrew Cunje as he walked along Jamaica Avenue from 201st Street to Carpenter Avenue. Kenner and Stephens then confronted the 25-year-old victim and moments later Mr. Cunje was on the ground bleeding.

DA Katz said the victim was rushed to an area hospital where he was treated for multiple stab wounds to his back and chest and later died from his injuries.

Two days later, according to the second complaint, defendant Kenner was seen on video surveillance around 11 p.m. on 89th Avenue near Rufus King Park. Kenner was seen with Benjamin Vasquez, who was stabbed multiple times. The 29-year-old victim died from the injuries.

According to the charges, when Kenner was apprehended, he was wearing the same clothes he was seen in on video footage as he followed the victim on December 21st and there was blood allegedly splattered on his clothing. Defendant Stephens was wearing the same boots from the video surveillance of December 21st and the boots also allegedly had blood stains on them.

Additionally, the DA said, police recovered a folding knife allegedly from the pocket of defendant Kenner.

In the first complaint, the investigation was conducted by Police Officer Sean Markey of the New York City Police Department's 103rd Precinct. In the second complaint, the investigation was conducted by Detective Glen Barker also with the NYPD's 103rd Precinct.

Assistant District Attorneys Joseph Grasso, Xhulia Derhemi and Kenneth Zawistowski, of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau, are prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Peter McCormack III and John Kosinski, Senior Deputy Bureau Chiefs, Karen Ross, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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